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10 May 1971

MEMORANDUM FOR: Mr. Coffey

The Chief, Support Services Staff and the Chief, [redacted] have furnished informal comments about the Inspector General's Report on Information Management in the Agency which I have incorporated with some of my own for your consideration in responding to Mr. Stewart's invitation to offer constructive suggestions toward improving his paper. Our comments may be more comprehensive than you had in mind for the immediate purpose but we can sort through them if that would be helpful. Our comments are keyed to paragraphs and page numbers.

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Paragraphs 22 and 23 on page 13. I wonder whether it would be useful to suggest that a specific reference to OMB Circular A-44 Transmittal Memorandum No. 1 be included here. TM No. 1 levied a requirement on all departments and agencies to produce reports inventories, establish reports management programs, and set goals for reducing reporting requirements. The Agency opted to deal with administrative reporting only and defer intelligence reporting until a later time. This end has been left dangling. There has not yet been any action to follow up with a review and analysis of reporting other than administrative nor has there been any real action to establish a continuing Agency Reports Management program.

Paragraph 13 on page 20 compares reading requirements served by the Cable Secretariat and CRS and the numbers of people in each of these components. The point is made in this chapter that the Cable Secretariat is a 24-hour day 7-day week operation but we don't know whether CRS has a similar schedule or works an 8-hour day 5-day week. Inferentially the comparison might be disparaging to the Cable Secretariat. It might be helpful if this point were clarified. It might also be useful to compare the number of analysts in the Cable Secretariat with the number of analysts in CRS rather than comparing the T/O strength of the Cable Secretariat with the number of analysts in CRS.

Paragraph 24 on page 25 supports the continuation of independent processing centers in OSP, RID, and FBIS without the benefit of a study on the possible benefits of centralization. It is my impression that presentations recently made

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by [redacted] have suggested that compartmentation is no longer as critical a factor to separatism as it has been in the past. In light of this, it might be useful for the I.G. to re-examine his conclusion and either rephrase it or reconsider stating it at all.

Paragraph 18 on page 36 says that the principal preoccupation of the Agency Records Administration Officer appears to be figuring out how to dramatize the need for additional storage space. I think the need for storage space has been successfully dramatized over the past few years as may be demonstrated by the authorization to spend several hundred thousand dollars to install movable shelving at the Records Center. Our present preoccupation is how to dramatize the need for constant continuing attention to all facets of records management from creation to destruction as a means of avoiding cyclical attention when there is a storage crisis. I don't mean to suggest that we feel we have solved the storage problem. We may never be able to completely solve that one. Our more immediate problem and preoccupation is to find some way to introduce controls over the creation of records and to reduce the rate of growth so that the recurrence of the storage crisis will be less frequent.

Paragraph 19 on page 36 would be more precise if it indicated that there is a staff of 6 professional and 3 clerical people in the Headquarters area and 17 people at the Records Center.

Paragraph 20 on page 37 may be somewhat misleading. While we have not been authorized funds for new construction, we are in process of spending about \$500,000 for renovation of a Butler warehouse building and installation of electrically driven movable shelving in the main Records Center building. Installation of the shelving will allow for increased storage of 29,300 cubic feet and renovations to the Butler building will allow increased storage of 16,500 cubic feet. This total of 45,800 cubic feet of new capacity was offset by the return of 25,500 cubic feet from temporary storage we had arranged with the Federal Records Center at Suitland, Maryland. Hence, our actual net gain in capacity will be 20,300 cubic feet. At the present rate of growth, this will give us space for about three years.

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Paragraph 21 on page 37 says that records management begins with the filing system. I believe that professional records officers would prefer to say that records management must begin with creation. Total records programs include correspondence management, forms management, and reports management. Filing systems are developed to handle temporary working storage of documents that have already been created. I am convinced that we must find effective ways of managing the creation of paper and if we are successful in doing that, filing systems can be immeasurably simplified.

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It might be helpful if paragraphs 22 and 23 on page 38 could be broadened to explain how the Agency Records Program can be strengthened and the functions of the Records Administration Officer broadened in a manner which is consistent with the administration of records programs on a decentralized basis. We have been struggling with this problem of centralization versus decentralization for some time and I have some conceptual difficulty reconciling the notion of an Agency Records Program composed of several separate and independent programs. Strengthening the role of the Records Administration Officer and broadening his function generally has been unacceptable to other Directorates. In any case, if his role is to continue to be guidance and assistance, then it seems to me we need to furnish instructions about when that guidance must be sought, when it may be offered without solicitation, what happens if it is not accepted, and how do we follow up to be sure that his guidance is acted upon. On the other hand, if we are fully committed to decentralize Records Management programs, then perhaps we should acknowledge that and abolish the central function of the Records Administration Branch.

I am concerned that the I.G. feels the archival function can be performed as an additional duty as stated in paragraph 34 on page 43. Our experience with records management functions being performed as a part-time additional duty has not been very satisfactory as the I.G. has recognized and pointed out in his report. I would be extremely reluctant to launch a new program of such magnitude on that kind of tenuous foundation. We already have about 16,000 cubic feet of material at the Records Center tentatively identified for archival retention. Experience has shown that it requires 3 to 5 man-hours to screen each cubic foot and select material truly worth keeping. This suggests that we have a backlog of 16 to 20 man-years of screening in addition to establishing and maintaining an on-going program which will prevent the development of such backlog in the future. I believe we should consider this a full-time job for a permanent organizational unit.

In paragraphs 16 and 17 on page 49 some organizational changes are suggested which seem certain to stimulate discussion. The I.G.'s reasons for leaving RID out of the proposed central authority are not clear nor are the reasons for including all of the Office of Communications but only part of the Central Reference Service. The I.G. says that technical considerations argue strongly for consolidation of these elements and we have heard the same thing repeatedly from other sources. I worry that we may allow technical considerations to displace the logic of the systems the technology is intended to serve. None of the presentations we have heard in recent months has attempted to deal with the logic for the present organization to show how it is negated by the current and coming technology. Suggestions for organizational changes are not offset or balanced by similar suggestions for maintaining the continued operation of the units which would be

left behind. The question of whether the technology really causes fundamental changes in the systems or simply offers a different technique for the systems to use in fulfilling their roles is not addressed anywhere. In paragraph 17 the I.G. acknowledges that his survey has not been conducted in sufficient depth to warrant a firm recommendation on the extent and nature of reorganization needed at this time. This seems to suggest that further study may be indicated. Perhaps it would be worthwhile for the I.G. to include such a recommendation or, alternatively, to suggest that if his recommendation for reorganization is accepted that a planning group be constituted to develop a detailed plan for its orderly implementation at a specified date, say 1 January 1972.

On the whole, this is a thought-provoking and useful report. It focuses attention on areas that need it desperately. I hope these comments will be useful and constructive.

/s.

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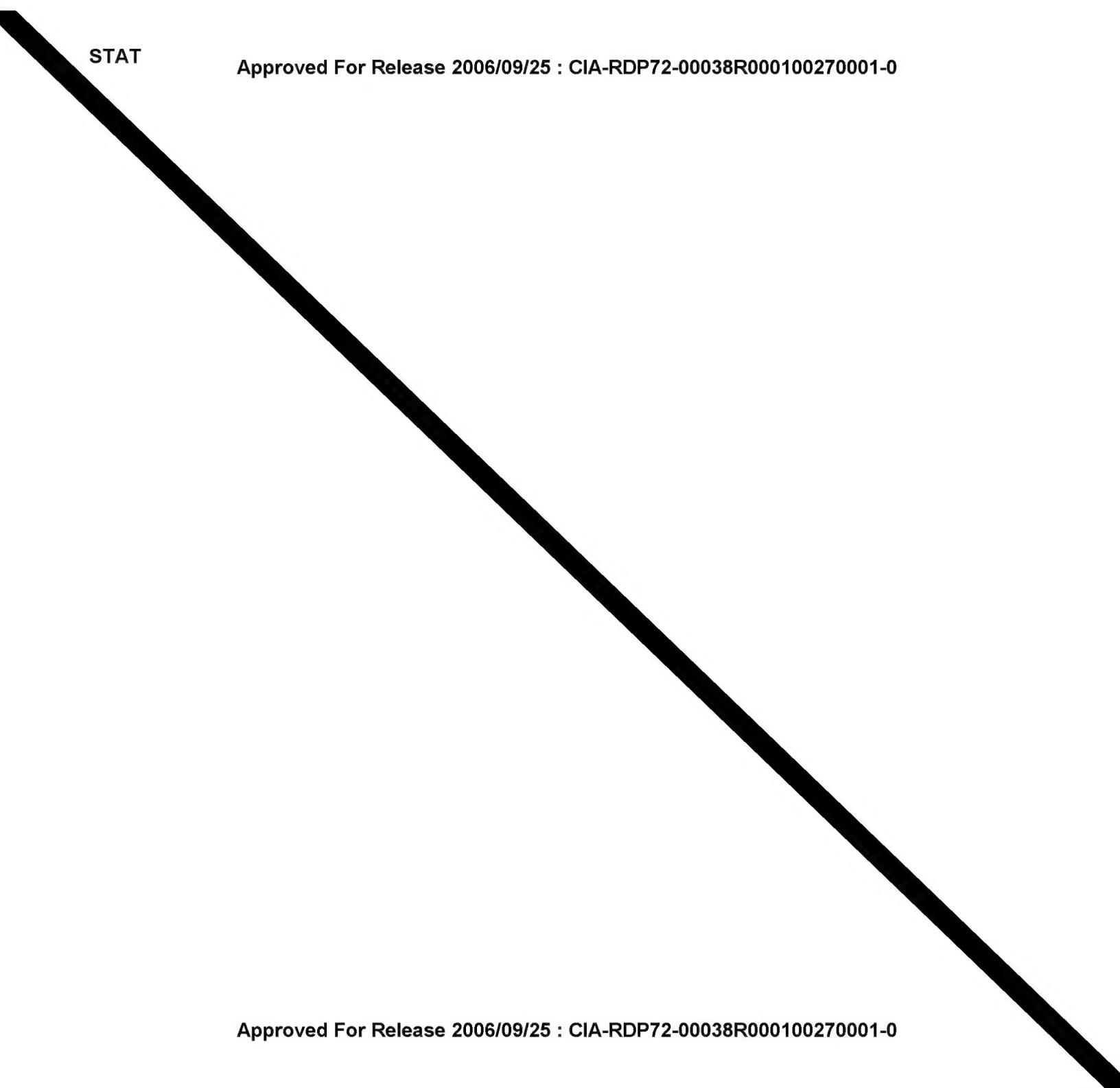
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Memorandum To:
Mr. Coffey
10 May 1971

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